

IN THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the above-referenced application:

1. (Currently amended) A computerized method for processing start-conditions processed by a computer system acting as a Workflow-Management-System (WFMS) or a computer system with comparable functionality, said WFMS comprising at least one process-model, said process-model modeling a process comprising one or more process-activities being nodes of an arbitrary graph and directed control-connectors of said graph defining a potential control flow within said process-model; said method being operative to process start-conditions in one of at least a first mode and a second mode, the method comprising the steps of:

~~in a standard behavior~~ the first mode of processing start-conditions, ~~evaluating~~ determining if a target-activity representing a work item of said process may be started by evaluating a truth-value of a start-condition once truth-values of all incoming control-connectors of said target-activity have been ~~posted~~ determined; and

said method further comprising a timed-evaluation-step, said timed-evaluation step comprising the steps of:

evaluating if at least a first one of said incoming control-connectors is associated with a time-interval defining a maximum period of time, as measured from a reference point, after which the target-activity is to be started, and evaluating if said time-interval has expired,

and, in the affirmative case, said timed-evaluation-step, in the second mode ~~as a deviation from the standard behavior~~ of processing start-conditions, continuing the processing to start said target-activity even if not all truth-values of said incoming control-connectors have been ~~posted~~ determined yet,

if the truth-value of said first incoming control-connector has been ~~posted~~ determined, and

if said truth-value evaluates to TRUE;

wherein the timed-evaluation-step is repeated until all control-connectors of the target activity have been evaluated, and wherein the method implemented on the computer system is by

default operative in the first mode, and the second mode is automatically selected when the truth-value of the first incoming control-connector has been determined to be TRUE.

2. (Previously presented) A method for processing of start-conditions according to claim 1, wherein said first incoming control-connector is associated with a commencing-activity, the commencing-activity corresponding to one of the process-activities in the process model, and wherein said timed-evaluation-step uses as a starting point for said time-interval the point in time when said commencing-activity is completed.

3. (Previously presented) A method for processing of start-conditions according to claim 2,

wherein said first incoming control-connector is associated with a path from said commencing-activity to said target-activity, and

said timed-evaluation-step is continuing the processing to start said target-activity, if said associated path has been traversed.

4. (Currently amended) A data processing system operative for processing start-conditions of one or more process-activities of a process in one of at least a first mode and a second mode, the system comprising means adapted to:

~~in a standard behavior~~ the first mode of processing start-conditions ~~evaluate~~ determine, if a target-activity representing a work item of a process may be started by evaluating a truth-value of a start-condition once truth-values of all incoming control-connectors of said target-activity have been ~~posted~~ determined; and initiate a timed-evaluation-step, said timed-evaluation step comprising the steps of:

evaluating if at least a first one of said incoming control-connectors is associated with a time-interval defining a maximum period of time, as measured from a reference point, after which the target-activity is to be started, and evaluating if said time-interval has expired,

and, in the affirmative case, said timed-evaluation-step, in the second mode ~~as a deviation from the standard behavior~~ of processing start-conditions, continuing the processing to

start said target-activity even if not all truth-values of said incoming control-connectors have been ~~posted~~ determined yet,

if the truth-value of said first incoming control-connector has been posted, and

if said truth-value evaluates to TRUE;

wherein the timed-evaluation-step is repeated until all control-connectors of the target activity have been evaluated, and wherein the data processing system is by default operative in the first mode, and the second mode is automatically selected when the truth-value of the first incoming control-connector has been determined to be TRUE.

5. (Currently amended) A data processing program for execution in a data processing system for processing start-conditions of one or more process-activities of a process in one of at least a first mode and a second mode, the data processing program comprising software code portions which when executed implement the steps of:

in ~~a standard behavior~~ the first mode of processing start-conditions, ~~evaluate~~ determining if a target-activity representing a work item of said process may be started by evaluating a truth-value of a start-condition once truth-values of all incoming control-connectors of said target-activity have been ~~posted~~ determined; and ~~initiate~~ initiating a timed-evaluation-step, said timed-evaluation step comprising the steps of:

evaluating if at least a first one of said incoming control-connectors is associated with a time-interval defining a maximum period of time, as measured from a reference point, after which the target-activity is to be started, and evaluating if said time-interval has expired,

and, in the affirmative case, said timed-evaluation-step, in the second mode ~~as a deviation from the standard behavior~~ of processing start-conditions, continuing the processing to start said target-activity even if not all truth-values of said incoming control-connectors have been ~~posted~~ determined yet,

if the truth-value of said first incoming control-connector has been posted, and

if said truth-value evaluates to TRUE;

wherein the timed-evaluation-step is repeated until all control-connectors of the target activity have been evaluated, and wherein the data processing program implemented on the data processing system is by default operative in the first mode, and the second mode is automatically

selected when the truth-value of the first incoming control-connector has been determined to be TRUE.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently amended) A computer-based process management system comprising at least one process-model, the process-model modeling a process comprising one or more process-activities being nodes of an arbitrary graph and directed control-connectors of the graph defining a potential control flow within the process-model, the system being operative: (i) in a first mode, to ~~evaluate~~ determine if a target-activity representing a work item of the process may be started by evaluating a truth-value of a start-condition once truth-values of all incoming control-connectors of the target-activity have been ~~posted~~ determined; and (ii) to perform a timed-evaluation-step, the timed-evaluation step evaluating:

if at least a first one of the incoming control-connectors is associated with a time-interval defining a maximum period of time, as measured from a reference point, after which the target-activity is to be started, and

if the time-interval has expired,

and, in the affirmative case, in a second mode, the timed-evaluation-step continuing the processing to start the target-activity even if not all truth-values of the incoming control-connectors have been ~~posted~~ determined yet,

if the truth-value of the first incoming control-connector has been ~~posted~~ determined, and

if the truth-value evaluates to TRUE;

wherein the timed-evaluation-step is repeated until all control-connectors of the target activity have been evaluated, and wherein the system is by default operative in the first mode, and the second mode is automatically selected when the truth-value of the first incoming control-connector has been determined to be TRUE.

8. (Currently amended) An article of manufacture for processing start-conditions processed by a computer system acting as a Workflow-Management-System (WFMS) or a computer system

with comparable functionality, the WFMS comprising at least one process-model, the process-model modeling a process comprising one or more process-activities being nodes of an arbitrary graph and directed control-connectors of the graph defining a potential control flow within the process-model, the article of manufacture comprising a machine readable medium containing one or more programs which when executed implement the steps of:

~~evaluating~~ determining, in a first mode, if a target-activity representing a work item of the process may be started by evaluating a truth-value of a start-condition once truth-values of all incoming control-connectors of the target-activity have been ~~posted~~ determined; and

performing a timed-evaluation-step, the timed-evaluation step evaluating:

if at least a first one of the incoming control-connectors is associated with a time-interval defining a maximum period of time, as measured from a reference point, after which the target-activity is to be started, and

if the time-interval has expired,

and, in the affirmative case, in a second mode, the timed-evaluation-step continuing the processing to start the target-activity even if not all truth-values of the incoming control-connectors have been ~~posted~~ determined yet,

if the truth-value of the first incoming control-connector has been posted, and

if the truth-value evaluates to TRUE;

wherein the timed-evaluation-step is repeated until all control-connectors of the target activity have been evaluated.

9. (Previously presented) The article of manufacture recited in claim 8, wherein the first incoming control-connector is associated with a commencing-activity, the commencing-activity corresponding to one of the process-activities in the process model, and wherein the timed-evaluation-step uses as a starting point for the time-interval the point in time when the commencing-activity is completed.

10. (Previously presented) The article of manufacture recited in claim 8, wherein the first incoming control-connector is associated with a path from the commencing-activity to the target-

activity, and the timed-evaluation-step continues processing to start the target-activity, if the associated path has been traversed.

11. (Currently amended) A computerized method for processing start-conditions of one or more process-activities in a computer system operative as a workflow management system (WFMS), the WFMS comprising at least one process-model for representing a process, the process-model forming an arbitrary graph comprising a plurality of nodes and corresponding control-connectors, each of the process-activities being represented by a given one of the nodes in the arbitrary graph and each of the control-connectors defining a potential control flow within the process-model, the method comprising the steps of:

in a first mode of processing, determining whether a target-activity representing a work item of the process may be started by evaluating a truth-value of a start-condition once truth-values of all incoming control-connectors of the target-activity have been ~~posted~~ determined; and

performing a timed-evaluation procedure, the timed-evaluation procedure comprising:

determining whether at least a first one of the incoming control-connectors of the target-activity is associated with a time-interval, the time-interval specifying a maximum period of time, as measured from a specified reference point, after which the target-activity is to be started;

when the first incoming control-connector is associated with a time-interval, determining whether the time-interval has expired;

when the time-interval has expired, in a second mode of processing, continuing the processing to start the target-activity even if the truth-values of all the incoming control-connectors have not yet been ~~posted~~ determined; and

repeating the timed-evaluation procedure for another one of the control-connectors, until all of the control-connectors of the target-activity have been evaluated;

wherein the second mode of processing is automatically selected when the truth-value of the first incoming control-connector has been posted, and when the truth-value evaluates to TRUE.